

Abstract

A method is provided for alleviating congestion in a computer network. The network includes a plurality of nodes interconnected by communication links, which communicate in accordance with at least an optical layer protocol and a second protocol layer. The method begins by receiving a signal in accordance with the optical layer protocol and determining if local forwarding capacity is available to forward the signal in accordance with the second protocol layer. If the local forwarding capacity is unavailable, the method continues by forwarding the signal in accordance with the optical layer protocol to another node having excess capacity so that the other node can forward the signal in accordance with the second protocol layer.